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Letter dated 22 July 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

The present letter is pursuant to Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), in which the Council requested that I present detailed recommendations to it regarding the size, operational aspects and mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia within 30 days of the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP). It follows my letter dated 4 March 2016 (S/2016/211).

On 23 June 2016, the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP concluded the agreement on a bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and laying down of arms. The agreement was signed in my presence by the heads of the delegations of each party to the talks and was received by the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, and the commander of FARC-EP, Timoleón Jiménez. The signing ceremony was held in Havana under the chairmanship of the President of Cuba, Raúl Castro Ruz, representing one of the guarantor countries of the peace process, with the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Børge Brende, representing the other guarantor country. The President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, and the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro Moros, representing the two accompanying countries, were present, as well as the President of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina Sánchez, whose country holds the pro tempore presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The President of El Salvador, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, the President of the Security Council for the month of June 2016, François Delattre, and the President of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft, were also present.

1. Ceasefire agreement

The broad parameters of the operations of the Mission will be informed by the terms of the agreement. The provisions on the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities foresee the establishment of 23 transitory local zones for normalization and eight local points for normalization, where the separation of forces and the laying down of arms will take place. Colombian army units will redeploy and FARC-EP units will move to those areas shortly after the entry into force of the ceasefire. They will establish camps within those areas, the number of which will depend on the number of combatants and local conditions. The agreement confirmed the creation of a monitoring and verification mechanism, already reflected in resolution 2261 (2016). The mechanism will be a tripartite technical body, made up of a government

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component, a FARC-EP component and an international component, the Mission, which will coordinate its work. The mechanism will monitor the transitory local zones for normalization, the local points for normalization and the security zones around them, and will visit the Colombian army units deployed in the vicinity. It will verify both parties' compliance with a set of rules on the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities established in the agreement.

The provisions on the laying down of arms define a sequence of steps leading to the receipt by the Mission of the weapons of FARC-EP. The Mission will begin by receiving and storing individual weapons from those FARC-EP members who will form part of the monitoring and verification mechanism and those who will carry out peace-related functions outside the zones. Thereafter, the Mission will verify the destruction of unstable weapons. Simultaneously, within 60 days of the entry into force of the final peace agreement, FARC-EP will bring into their camps individual and collective weapons, which the Mission will monitor. During the period from 60 to 150 days after the entry into force of the agreement, all such weapons will be progressively received by the observers of the Mission in a phased process and stored in containers under United Nations monitoring. During the final stage of the laying down of arms, by 180 days after the entry into force of the agreement, arms will be removed by the United Nations from the transitory local zones for normalization and local points for normalization and used for the construction of monuments.

2. United Nations Mission in Colombia

Under the agreement, and consistent with the mandate given to the Mission in resolution 2261 (2016), the Mission will assume responsibility for the verification of the laying down of arms. It will coordinate the work of the national, regional and local headquarters of the monitoring and verification mechanism, which is in charge of monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. It will also be responsible for settling differences between the parties and formulating recommendations with regard to the implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms. Finally, it will report independently on compliance with the commitments made by the parties in the agreement.

3. Ongoing preparations

As conveyed to the Security Council in my letter dated 4 March 2016, the Mission has been carrying out a three-phased approach to the set-up and operationalization of the Mission. A critical part of this effort is the deployment of military and police observers from observer-contributing countries. The first phase includes the deployment of observers to carry out preparations at the national and regional levels. During this phase, the Department of Political Affairs has been working in close collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. A first group of 36 observers from eight countries, under the leadership of the Chief Observer, General Javier Pérez Aquino of Argentina, and the Deputy Chief Observer, General José Mauricio Villacorta of El Salvador, arrived in Colombia in June. A second group of 44 observers arrived on 17 July. Additional requests for nominations have been sent with the goal of deploying an additional 100 observers in August. The Secretariat has stressed the importance of nominating women observers. The first group of observers has completed induction training. The Mission has established fruitful cooperation with

the United Nations country team in Bogota and benefited significantly in terms of information-sharing, training and operational support.

Logistical and administrative support

Logistical and administrative support for the Mission has been planned bearing in mind the anticipated duration of the mandate and the well-developed local capacity in Colombia in terms of infrastructure, services and qualified personnel. Since mid-May 2016, the Mission, supported by the Department of Field Support and the Government of Colombia, has had extensive discussions on support for the monitoring and verification mechanism and the Mission at large. These consultations have been taking place in several logistical and technical working groups with key government ministries.

Security

The Government of Colombia, specifically the Colombian police, will assume responsibility for the security of the monitoring and verification mechanism and the Mission at large. Very thorough and productive discussions have taken place between the Colombian authorities and the Department of Safety and Security with regard to security guarantees to United Nations observers and staff. Through a unified security structure, the Department will provide leadership, operational support and advice relating to the United Nations security management system policies and procedures, in close cooperation and liaison with the Colombian authorities.

4. Observations

The agreement was signed on 23 June 2016. As I stated in my remarks at the signing ceremony in Havana, the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP deserve to be congratulated on this historic achievement, which heralds the end of the longest conflict in the region.

The deployment of observers to Bogotá began only two days after the signing of the agreement. To date, 80 observers have been deployed and have begun working with the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP in paving the way for the implementation of the agreement. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the wisdom of the Security Council when it authorized, in January, preparations on the ground for the establishment of the Mission, when negotiations were far from over, and to express appreciation to CELAC members who confirmed their trust in the process by making their personnel available to the Mission.

While the functions and the broad operational parameters of the Mission have been clarified, key elements still require assessment before detailed recommendations on the size of the Mission can be made. Tripartite teams are about to visit the 23 transitory local zones for normalization and eight local points for normalization in order to determine the size of the zones as well as related security and logistical requirements for the deployment of observers. The number of United Nations observers and civilian staff and their distribution across the national, regional and local offices can be decided only on the basis of such visits. I will revert to the Security Council with the requested level of detail about the size of the Mission and operational aspects as soon as this field assessment is completed, and therefore request an extension of the Council's deadline until 19 August 2016.

The agreement has confirmed the many functions that the Security Council conferred on the Mission in resolution 2261 (2016): observation, dispute resolution, recommendations to the parties, coordination of the tripartite monitoring and verification mission, verification of the laying down of weapons and reporting. These are meaningful attributes. The fact that both the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP chose to give the Mission such broad terms of reference is in itself a positive sign. It gives the Mission the opportunity to serve, for either side, as a mutual guarantor of implementation. It also gives it the opportunity to serve, for Colombian society as a whole, as a guarantor that the end of this conflict is irreversible and that the promises made in Havana will be kept in Colombia.

I would like to reiterate my gratitude to my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, who continued to advise the parties as they concluded the agreement, while also leading the planning process for the deployment of the Mission.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon